with both quantity and value restrictions through initially quantities of these export products were not mentioned.

(iii) The issuance of Advance Release Orders and Intermediate Advance Licences under VABAL Scheme have been stopped with effect from 1.4.93.

(iv) The flexible value addition benefit under para 53 of the Exim Policy originally extended to the drug sector has been withdrawn with effect from October, 92.

(v) Quantity and value have been restricted in respect of items for which the duty plus auxiliary duty ranges from 0 to 10 per cent and for certain packing materials, with effect from October, 1992.

(vi) Quality and value have been restricted in respect of items which constitute upto 2 per cent by weight/quantity in the export product with effect from 1.4.93.

(vii) The list of sensitive items was expanded further and items such as Lime stone, Furnace Oil, Lubricating Oil/Gear oil, Adhesive Tape, Plasticizer, some solvents and chemicals etc. have been included in the list with effect from September, 1993.

(viii) Issue of Value Based Licence for Silk items has been totally withdrawn.

(ix) The list of sensitive items has been expanded by placing 20 more items in the sensitive list vide Public Notice No. 163 dated 14th September, 1993.

(x) All Value based advance licences where neither any import nor any export took place have been frozen vide notification dated 25.1.94 Such licence holders have, however, been given option to get their licences endorsed for making imports in accordance with the Policy prevalent on the date of such endorsement.

(xi) Further, an inter-Ministerial Committee has been constituted by the Government in February, 94 to critically examine the operation of the VABAL Scheme, to find out the areas and extent of abuse/misuse or loopholes in the scheme and to suggest remedial measures.

Indian Debt to Russia

97. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) The total amount of Indian debt to Russia at present;

(b) whether the P.M. during his recent visit to the Soviet Union discussed the matter with that Government about its proposed auctioning by Russia;

(c) if so, outcome thereof;

(d) How it is utimately proposed to deal with this matter; and

(e) whether Russia is likely to seek India's consent for right to use funds accumulated in the Russian account with the Reserve Bank for setting up joint ventures in India;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) India's outstanding debt to Russia as on 31.3.1994 was about Rs. 30,386 crores.

(b) to (d) This subject was discussed in the course of the Prime Minister's visit to the Russian Federation. The Russian Government has indicated its intention to auction a portion of India's annual rupee debt repaymet to Russia amongst prospective importers in Rnssia who would be required to deposit roubles to Russian Government account before being given the entitlement to effect imports from India.

The auction process would establish the entitlement to import from India. The Russian Government has assured that those importers who win the entitlement to import through the auction would still be required to follow- the Inter-Governmental agreements. The goods can, therefore only be exported to Russia and diversion of these goods to other countries is not permissible.

(e) Under the present Inter-Governmental agreements India's rupee debt repayments to Russia can only be used for export of Indian goods and services to Russia. The Russian Government has indicated its interest in using a portion of our rupee debt repayments for setting up joint ventures in India. However, no concrete proposals have yet been received, and the detailed modalities are yet to be agreed upon between the two sides.

Failure of United Bank of India to open branches in the North-eastern Zone

98. SHRI DAVID LEDGER: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the United Bank of India has failed to open many branches in the north-eastern zone inspite of Reserve Bank of India's instructiosn; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that United Bank of India was allotted 79 centres for opening branches in the North Eastern Region under 1985-90 Plan, out of which 14 authorisation were pending with the bank as at the end of the plan period extended upto 31st March 1993. The reasons for not opening branches at the pending centres allotted by RBI are lack of basic infrastructural facilities like non availability of suitable premises, all whether roads. Telecommunication, Security etc. Subsequently, RBI had decided to treat all the pending licences issued under the earlier policy as canceled|lapsed with effect from 1st April 1993 and banks were advised to surrender the relative licences to the concerned Regional Offices for cancellation thereof,. Under the 1990-95 Plan, United Bank of India has been allotted 4 localities in urban areas of North Eastern State for opening its branches out of which one authorisation is pending for Guwahati in Assam. In addition to above, on the basis of centres indentified by the bank for opening of branches at semi-urban centres, RBI has advised their Guahati Regional Office to issue licences in respect of three centres namely Viswanath, Chareli in Sonitpur District of Assam, Aizwal in Mizoram and Bisalgarh (Beltali) in the West Tripura District of Tripura State, as and when approached by the bank after finalisation of necessary infrastructure, at the concerned centres. However, so far no licences have been issued in the above cases. RBI is of the view that the bank has been able to implement the branch expansion programme satisfactorily.

रूस द्वारा भारतीय रुपये की नीलामी

99. श्री विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या रूस भारतीय माल की नीलामी करने जा रहा है ;

(ख) रूस के पास भारतीय रुपयों की कुल कितनी राशि पड़ी है और इसमें से कितनी राशि की नीलामी करने का उनका विचार है ;